

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 5 • Monday, March 22, 2004

Aggie baseball comes from behind in Waco

By Jordan Meserole
THE BATTALION

The "Battle of the Brazos" lived up to its name Sunday afternoon as No. 9 Texas A&M University defeated unranked Baylor 8-7 in Waco.

The Aggies (21-4, 1-2 Big 12) rallied from two runs down to tie the game and capture the lead in the ninth inning to win their first conference game of the season.

Baylor (8-14, 2-1) took the overall series win after defeating the Aggies in Friday and Saturday night games, placing the Bears in an early tie for first place in the Big 12.

"The way they (the Bears) were playing yesterday and this weekend, I think they could beat most teams," A&M head coach Mark Johnson said. "But we came back and got the win, so that's what matters."

The normally-productive Aggie offense had been cooled down in the first two games of the series by Baylor's pitching staff, collecting only five hits, no runs and striking out seven times on Saturday. The Aggie bats came to life once again on Sunday though, tagging 13 hits.

"It felt good to come out and go at it better," A&M senior outfielder Cory Patton said. "We hadn't done so well

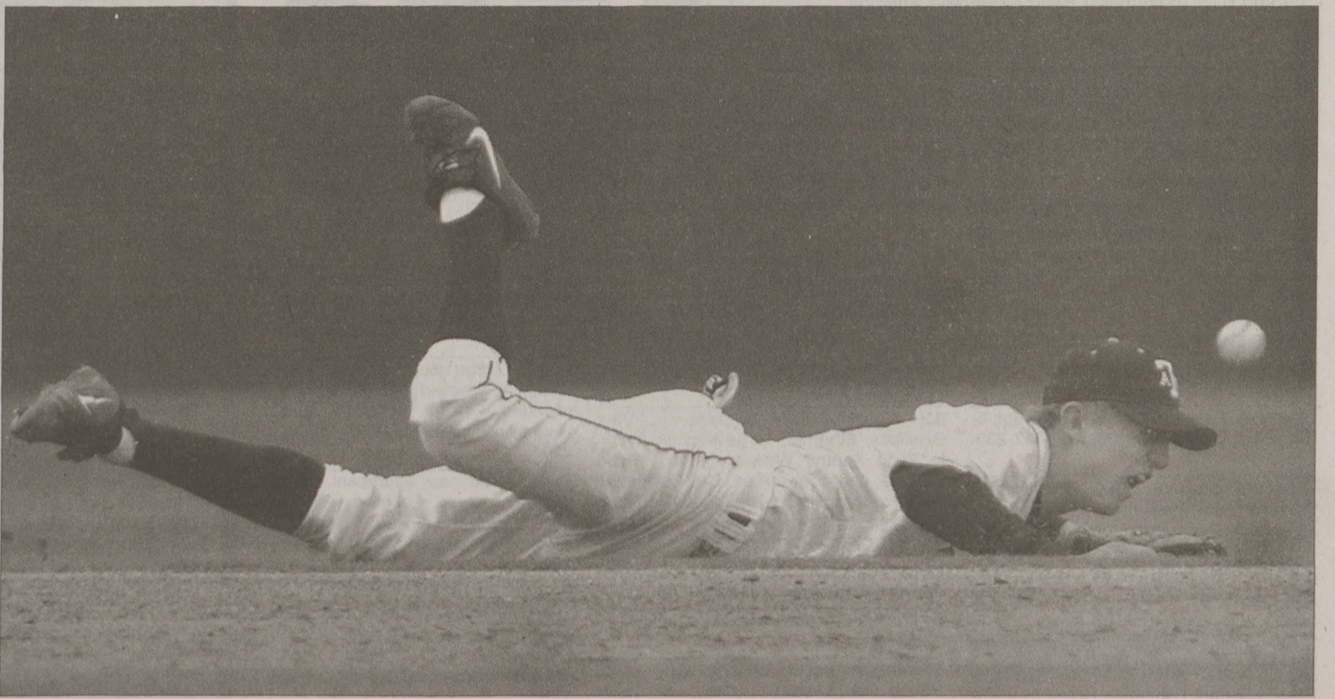
in the first couple of games, so it was nice to turn it around."

The Aggies put the first runs of the game on the board in the second inning after a three-run home run by sophomore catcher Craig Stinson. With runners on first and second, Stinson hit the second pitch he saw from Baylor junior lefty Trey Taylor over the left field fence. Stinson finished the day as the top Aggie hitter, going three-for-four with four runs batted in.

"I was just seeing a lot of good pitches and taking good hacks," Stinson said. "It was good for us to come out and score some quick runs."

The Aggies added two more runs in the third inning pushing the lead to 5-0. In the bottom of the inning, though, the Bears finally found a way to get hits off of A&M junior pitcher Kyle Marlatt, who had retired five of the first six batters. The Bears put three runs on the board, cutting the Aggie lead to 5-3. The Bears would add four more runs in the fifth inning, all off of singles, taking a 7-5 lead in the game.

The game would take a bounce in the Aggies' favor off a strange play in the seventh inning. With no outs and Patton on third base, A&M senior infielder Eric Scheidt hit a hard grounder down the third base line which hit Patton in the back, sending



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

Aggie sophomore shortstop **Cliff Pennington** misses a line drive during the matchup against University of New Mexico last month.

the ball careening into left field.

Patton easily scored, tying the game at 7-7. Despite arguments by Baylor head coach Steve Smith that Patton interfered with Baylor third baseman Michael Griffin's ability to get to the

ball, the umpires upheld the run.

"It's just one of those fluke plays in baseball that can change everything in the game," Griffin said.

The Aggies scored the game-winning run in the ninth inning off of a sin-

gle by Stinson that scored A&M junior Travis Bartek from third base.

"The guys were discouraged a bit coming out today," Johnson said. "But we never gave up and came out ahead."

High flying



EVAN O'CONNELL • THE BATTALION

Senior **Jason Mathews** pole vaults Saturday afternoon at the Frank G. Anderson track and field complex. **Mathews** finished sixth place with a vault of 4.7 meters. **Mathews** qualified for the U.S. Olympic Team Trials in

men's javelin on Saturday. Senior **Katy Doyle** also qualified for the Olympic trials for javelin on the women's side. Overall, Aggies finished first in 12 events and qualified for NCAA nationals 16 times.

Record-setting meet at natatorium

By Jordan Meserole
THE BATTALION

Records fell faster than Martha Stewart's stock at the NCAA women's swimming and diving championships last weekend.

A total of 39 records were set in the three-day meet, including two world records.

Auburn University won the championship with 569 points, becoming the fourth team in NCAA women's history to win three consecutive titles. Texas A&M University finished 16th, the highest finish in the championships for the Aggies since an 11th place finish in 1985.

"We swam well and had a couple of unfortunate mishaps, but it's still the most points we've scored at an NCAA meet," A&M head coach Steve Bultman said. "We're going to come out of here with a lot of confidence."

Thursday's preliminary events gave fans a glimpse of what was to come for the next two days, as records fell in four of the five swimming events.

Thursday night's finals continued the excitement from the afternoon, as every event saw a new record time posted. The crowd roared as the University of Georgia 200-meter relay team broke the world record along with the NCAA, American and U.S. Open records.

"There's a huge value on world records and NCAA records," Georgia head coach Jack Baurle said. "To win two relays at this level and the way we did them ... we're elated."

Eight Aggie swimmers set career and personal best times and broke three school records in the day one events, including the 200-meter relay squad that broke the school record in the event with a time of 1:41:69.

A&M sophomore diver Alida DiPlacido continued her good season, finishing 5th in the one-meter diving event.

"This being my first national championship, I didn't really know what to expect," DiPlacido said. "I didn't really put any pressure on myself. I just said to myself, 'I'm going to try my best,' and that's what I did."

Friday's preliminaries went quietly, with only one broken record. The finals events that same night wouldn't be as quiet, though.

Records fell in every event, and another world record was set in the 100-meter breaststroke. Stanford University senior

Tara Kirk broke the record with a time of 1:04:79, also finishing her collegiate career undefeated in the event.

"I always knew I had it in me, I just had to make it come out," Kirk said. "I feel like I'm ready to go out and play with the big girls."

A&M records continued to be reset, with five more falling on the second day. A&M freshman Rebecca Sturdy had the best individual finish for A&M in the three days, taking first in the consolation finals of the 100-meter backstroke.

Records were broken in every event Saturday, including two more A&M records, set by A&M swimmers, bringing the weekend total to 10 school records.

Auburn sealed the overall championship title by winning two individual finals events in a row.

"What you saw during the meet was how many truly awesome swimmers there are in the NCAA program," Auburn head coach David Marsh said. "We're very thrilled and honored to come out of here with a victory."

"I just said to myself, 'I'm going to try my best,' and that's what I did."

— Alida DiPlacido
Aggie sophomore diver

NCAA tournament ends second round

By Jim O'Connell
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The NCAA basketball tournament wrapped closed its second round on Saturday narrowing the field to 16 teams.

Stanford couldn't come up with a third miracle. The Cardinal became the first No. 1 seed to be knocked out of the tournament, losing 70-67 to eighth-seeded Alabama. Unlike its buzzer-beating victories over Arizona and Washington State during the season, Stanford's Dan Grunfeld missed a possible game-tying 3-pointer at the end of this one.

Nevada turned the tables on Gonzaga. The Wolf Pack made it eight straight years that a No. 10 seed beat a No. 2 and two of those wins were by Gonzaga. The Bulldogs haven't had much success as a high seed. When they were a No. 10 seed or lower over the last six tournaments, the Bulldogs made it to at least the round of 16. As a sixth seed in 2002, Gonzaga lost in the first round, as a No. 9 last year, the Bulldogs lost in the second round. As a 10 in 1999 and 2000, they went to the regional finals and round of 16, respectively, and as a 12 in 2001, they went to the round of 16. The loss snapped the Bulldogs' school-record 21-game winning streak. Their only other losses this season were to top seeds Stanford and Saint Joseph's.

Saint Joseph's hasn't trailed much all season, but the Hawks were down 21-12 early to Texas Tech before going on a 24-2 run. Still, the Red Raiders tied the game at 60 with 5:09 left before Saint Joseph's pulled out a 70-65 victory.

The story of Selection Sunday was the contentious public disagreement between Saint Joseph's coach Phil Martelli and CBS analyst Billy Packer over the latter's comments about the Hawks not deserving to be a No. 1 seed. Saint Joseph's will play Wake Forest, Packer's alma mater, in the East Rutherford Regional semifinals on Thursday. "I guarantee you he won't be rooting for us," Hawks guard Delonte West said.

The Atlantic Coast Conference went 6-0 in the first round and the Big 12 went 4-0. Both leagues suffered losses on Saturday. Maryland ended the ACC's perfect run, losing 72-70 to Syracuse, while Texas Tech was the first Big 12 team to go down, losing 70-65 to Saint Joseph's. In a matchup of the two leagues, Texas of the Big 12 beat North Carolina 78-75.

Two double-digit seeds reached the round of 16 last year — No. 10 Auburn and No. 12 Butler, both of whom lost in the regional semifinals. Three teams had a chance to get there this year. No. 10 Nevada did it with the win over Gonzaga and No. 12 Manhattan didn't, losing to Wake Forest. No. 12 Pacific plays Kansas on Sunday.

Duke's win over Seton Hall moved the Blue Devils into the round of 16 for the seventh straight year. The next longest streak of those teams which advanced to the second round is three by Kentucky, which plays UAB on Sunday. Maryland also had a streak of three straight going but the Terrapins lost to Syracuse.

Wake Forest's win over Manhattan moved the Demon Deacons to the second weekend of the tournament for the first time since 1996 when Tim Duncan led them to the regional finals.

Syracuse beat Maryland 72-70 in a matchup of the last two national champions. The Orangemen made the defending champions 3-0 all-time in such games, joining Cincinnati, which beat Ohio State in the 1962 title game, and Arkansas, which beat North Carolina in the national semifinals in 1995.

Connecticut's 72-55 victory over DePaul made Huskies coach Jim Calhoun 7-0 against his former assistants. Blue Demons coach Dave Leitao played for Calhoun at Northeastern and was his assistant at both Northeastern and Connecticut. Calhoun missed 9:24 of the game when he left for the locker room with an upset stomach. He missed a first-round victory over Texas-San Antonio in 1996 with a stomach problem and Leitao took over the Huskies for that game.

DePaul's Andre Brown received a sarcastic cheer from the fans late in the loss to Connecticut. The senior forward went 0-for-10 from the free throw line in the Blue Demons' 76-69 double-overtime victory over Dayton in the first round. He went to the line for the first time Saturday with 1:01 to play and missed the first of two foul shots, then made the second, drawing the cheer.